

For immediate publication

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Planning consent granted for new affordable artists' studios in Mile End

Acme Studios recently took another step towards achieving its long-term goal of increasing the number of permanent, affordable and accessible studios for artists in London with the news that its Copperfield Road building in Mile End, London E3, has been given permission to be extended.

Planning consent for a new two-storey roof-top development will allow the creation of 13 new studios and five work/live units for artists, together with expanded office space for the organisation.

Part-funded by Arts Council England, the scheme is part of Acme's rolling development programme aiming to deliver 400 new, permanent and affordable studios within ten years.

Architects Landolt & Brown were appointed in December 2005 to undertake a feasibility study, following a RIBA-led competitive interview. Acme's detailed brief, based on 30 years' experience of studio design development, placed an emphasis on maximising useable floor space whilst keeping construction cost to a minimum. Clients and architects shared the common vision of achieving a model of low-cost design and construction for the additional floors.

Following a rigorous analysis of the constraints of the existing building, the study proposed the use of structural cross-laminated timber panels to form the new storeys.

Offering good thermal and acoustic properties, these pre-fabricated panels can be installed remarkably quickly, reducing construction time and disruption to artists in the existing studios. Because the panels can be used in their exposed state, the need for subsequent lining trades is also reduced.

Following the feasibility work, Landolt & Brown were commissioned to develop detailed designs that were submitted to Tower Hamlets' planners in December 2006 and granted planning consent in July of this year.

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Acme Studios is a group
of three exempt charities
registered under the
Industrial and Provident
Societies Act 1965

Members of the National
Housing Federation

**Acme Studios Housing
Association Limited**
Reg No IP28377R
Vat Reg No 680 7763 03
**Acme Artists Housing
Association Limited**
Reg No IP27215R
**Acme Housing
Association Limited**
Reg No IP20468R

Acme is delighted with the scheme - the elegant additional floors will sit comfortably above the industrial mass of the original building and every possible inch of new space has been created to ensure long-term economic sustainability.

While adding new floors is highly complex, not least because it impacts on the structure, services, access and environmental performance of the existing building, it also provides opportunities to upgrade. The new development will introduce a larger accessible lift to serve all floors and a carbon neutral biomass fuelled heating system.

For Acme's Co-Directors, Jonathan Harvey and David Panton, the experience of working with the design team has been a very enjoyable one. Throughout the process they had the fullest confidence in the professional and creative skills of those involved.

Jan Landolt and Adam Brown, with over thirty years architectural experience between them, joined forces in September 2005 and this will be their first major project to achieve planning: "The challenge for the team has been to find innovative ways of constructing new studio space which keeps building cost low but creates a building with individuality and design integrity. We have worked closely with Acme to design out many of the unnecessary costs associated with more conventional construction methods and have ended up with a building which should provide a good environment in which artists can work and live, as well as one which reflects the creative nature of its occupants in its external character."

END

Contact:

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Notes to Editors:

- The full design team for the roof-top development is: Architect and Lead Consultant, Landolt & Brown; Structural Engineer, Techniker; Building Services and Environment, PHA Consult; Quantity Surveyors, Boyden and Company; Planning Consultant, Savills Hephher Dixon; Daylight Consultant, Anstey Horne; Access Consultant, David Bonnett Associates; Planning Supervision, King Safety Services; Acoustic Consultant, Paul Gillieron Associates; Fire Safety Consultant, Faber Maunsell.
- Acme received considerable help in undertaking the initial RIBA-led competitive interview from its CABE (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment) Enabler, Peter Morris of Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM), whose advice was made available through Arts Council England's GfAC programme.
- Acme's Copperfield Road building has been established since 1992 and contains 48 self-contained studios on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors with Matt's Gallery on the ground floor and Acme Studios' office on the 4th floor.
- Acme Studios is a London-based charity that supports fine art practice by providing artists with affordable studio and living space. Acme was formed by artists in 1972 and is the largest organisation of its kind in the United Kingdom. It has helped over 5,000 artists with this fundamental means of support. Acme is recognised as the leading development agency for artists' working and living accommodation.
- Acme currently manages 370 individual non-residential studio units across 10 sites, nine in London and one in Cornwall. Acme owns four of its 10 buildings. and has over 700 artists registered on its studio waiting list.
- In January 2005 Arts Council England awarded Acme Studios £2,000,000 from its Grants for the Arts – Capital (GfAC) fund to invest in its long-term studio development programme. The first to be achieved in this programme, The Galleria Studios in Peckham, opened in June 2006 and created 50 new-build studios as part of a ground-breaking, mixed-use, planning-gain project in partnership with Barratt Homes.
- Acme has pioneered the development of affordable 'work/live' space that provides genuine workspace with ancillary accommodation for artists. A number of 'live/work' schemes have been commercially developed throughout London in recent years but have often drifted into residential use against the planning policies of local authorities who wish to maintain employment use. This has caused local authorities to refuse consent for live/work schemes because they cannot guarantee the continuation of employment use. In granting planning consent for 'live/work' units, Tower Hamlets' have recognised Acme's track record as an affordable workspace provider.

- At least 430 studio units managed by other studio organisations in London are at risk over the next 10 years from rising land and property values.



Visualisations of Copperfield Road development